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ABSTRACT

This booklet, one of a series featuring the Canadian provinces, presents a brief overview of Quebec and is suitable for teacher reference or student reading. Separate sections discuss geography, climate, population, history, political history, recent politics, agriculture, forestry, mining, manufacturing and industry, hydroelectric power, transportation, arts and culture, and sports and tourism. Specific topics include a description of the province's three major geographic regions, climate, and native peoples. Also discussed are the early habitation of the Montagnais and Algonquin Indians, and later colonization conflicts of the French colonists. A discussion of Quebec's political development from the 1930's to the 1980's includes a description of Quebec's "renewed" political policies. The importance of the country's agriculture and dairy production, paper and timber industry, asbestos mining and mineral refinement, manufacturing and industry, hydroelectric potential, and busy water routes is emphasized. The re-awakening of French-Canadian culture through the folk "chanson" and other arts is described. The final section focuses on Montreal's hockey and football teams, water sports, and tourism industry. In addition, a simple map showing Canada's major cities and provinces is included. (LH)

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Quebec

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Quebec, the largest of Canada's ten provinces, is also the oldest. Beginning with Samuel de Champlain's *habitation* on the banks of the St. Lawrence in 1608, Quebec has played a crucial part in opening up North America. Even today, new regions are being developed. Northern Quebec, more than twice the size of France, has vast reserves of minerals, hydroelectric power and forest lands. Immense iron ore deposits are being mined in eastern Quebec and there has been continuous exploration in the James Bay region. The future is promising. Running parallel with this economic development is a wide-ranging cultural renaissance that has strengthened the French fact in North America.

Geography

There are three geographic areas in Quebec running north to south down the province: the Canadian Shield; the St. Lawrence Lowlands; and the Appalachian Mountains. The Canadian Shield, which is the most spectacular region, extends from Canada's Arctic waters in the north to the Laurentians, the world's oldest mountain range, in the south and features interesting contrasts of plant and animal life. In the northernmost parts of the Shield, the ground is permanently frozen and only dwarf birch trees (scarcely 30 centimetres in height) and a lichen called caribou moss grow there. Farther south are groves of stunted trees but also productive forests used by Quebec's pulp and paper and lumbering industries. Most of the province's population lives in the St. Lawrence Lowlands where the soil is most fertile. The land is cut by thousands of lakes and rivers, covering 290 000 square kilometres of Quebec. It is here that the St. Lawrence, one of the world's longest rivers, flows eastward into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. And finally, the terrain becomes rocky as the St. Lawrence Lowlands give way to the Appalachian belt.

Climate

The duration of Quebec's winter varies from region to region, but snow normally covers the ground from 12 to 23 weeks. On hearing of England's conquest of New France in 1759, the French author Voltaire dismissed the lost colony as only "a few acres of snow". This was, needless to say, a glaring oversimplification. Winter temperatures, although they do plummet far below freezing, are often accompanied by dazzling blue skies. And summers can be very hot. The blossoming trees and flowers of spring and the colourful foliage of autumn make today's description of Quebec, *la belle province,* much more apt.

Population

Quebec has a population of 6 353 000, of which approximately 81 per cent is of French origin and 12 per cent of British origin. Most of the remaining 7 per cent consists of other European groups.

The native peoples, the Indian and Inuit, live mainly in northern Quebec. Fort Chimo, founded in 1828 as a Hudson's Bay Company trading post, has the largest Inuit community in the province. The Cree nation, some 6 500 in number, lives in the southwest. Modern development has brought numerous changes in their way of living as they have combined native traditions with the styles of modern Quebec.

History

It is almost certain that the first people to inhabit Quebec several thousand years ago, were from among the Asian groups, who had crossed the Bering Strait and settled in various places across North America. They were called Indians by the first Europeans in North America who thought they had reached the Far East. The country immediately north of the St. Lawrence River was inhabited chiefly by two scattered Indian groups—the Montagnais and the Algonquins. They were nomadic and lived off the land by hunting moose and other forest animals and by spearing salmon and eels in the rivers, lakes and sea.

French explorer Jacques Cartier and his sailors landed in Gaspé in July 1534 and claimed the new territory on behalf of the King of France. Cartier made two later voyages in 1535 and 1542, but interest in the new colony waned until 1608 when Samuel de Champlain constructed a wooden *habitation* at a spot the Indians named "Québec". It was a natural rock citadel with a commanding view of the St. Lawrence. The French leader was soon on friendly terms with local Indians, who persuaded him in 1609 to participate in a raid against a neighbouring tribe—the Iroquois. Thus, a bitter conflict began between the French and the Iroquois which lasted more than 100 years.

Owing to unrest in the colony, French authorities intervened in 1672 and sent a new governor, Comte de Frontenac, a new intendant, Jean Talon and a new bishop, Bishop Laval, to New France as Quebec was known then. This marked the beginning of a prosperous period in the fortunes of New France as the economy flourished and the population grew.

A series of European wars punctuated the first half of the eighteenth century. The Anglo-French rivalry in Europe led to periodic fighting in North America, which climaxed in 1759. The British army, under General James Wolfe landed at Quebec City and defeated the French forces

under the command of Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm. Both generals died during the engagement on the Plains of Abraham. With the fall of New France, a British military administration was organized to govern the colony. Because it was anxious to avoid the expenses of administering another colony, there was little interference in the local way of life. A basic administrative system, however, was implemented under the terms of the Proclamation Act in 1763 and later the Quebec Act in 1774. The Quebec Act proclaimed an extension of the colony's boundaries, gave full freedom to the Roman Catholic Chuch, maintained the seigneurial system of land tenure and permitted the use of French civil law.

During the American Revolution, American troops beseiged Quebec City throughout the winter of 1775 in an unsuccessful attempt to seize the colony. With the coming of peace, attention turned towards internal political reform.

The Constitutional Act of 1791 divided Quebec into two provinces, Upper Canada and Lower Canada, and provided for a nominated legislative council and an elected legislative assembly in each province. The first election under this arrangement took place in 1792.

Reforms, however, did not keep pace with the growing demand for change. In Lower Canada the reform movement was headed by Louis-Joseph Papineau, leader of the French-speaking majority in the legislative assembly. In 1834 Papineau and his followers issued a long list of grievances for which they demanded redress. When Britain refused to allow the election of members to the legislative council, a general insurrection broke out in 1837. Fortunately, there was little violence but the rebellion led the British to re-examine their policies.

Lord Durham was appointed governor general and given authority to study the problems and recommend solutions. Upon his return to England, Durham proposed that the two Canadas be reunited and granted responsible government. These recommendations were implemented under the provisions of the Act of Union in 1841. Within five years, the reformers, led by Louis Lafontaine, who supported the political and cultural recovery of the French Canadians were in control of the government. In 1854 the moderates in the reform party joined with moderates in the Conservative Party, some of whom were British merchants in Montreal. This group of political figures and businessmen formulated plans for the confederation of the provinces of British North America, and dominated the political scene until 1896.

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The British North America Act of 1867* was a practical compromise resolving a number of economic, political and military issues. French became an official language and Canada East became the province of Quebec, with its own provincial government and specified powers in social and civil affairs. The 30 years after Confederation were characterized by racial, cultural and religious disagreements. By the end of the period Sir Wilfrid Laurier, a French-Canadian Catholic, was the prime minister of Canada.

The political rise of the federal Liberal Party in 1896 corresponded to the growth in Quebec of large enterprises, especially in such sectors as hydroelectricity, the forest industry and mining. Laurier encouraged national unity and brought provincial statesmen from across Canada into his cabinet. He remained in power until 1911 and in that time helped to estalish a Canadian presence in world affairs.

His successor Robert Borden, leader of the Conservative Party, was the prime minister during the First World War. The introduction of conscription in 1917 caused general dismay in Quebec and an immediate political crisis in Canada. By the end of 1917 Borden was obliged to call an election over the issue and while he retained power, the Liberals won in Quebec.

Quebec politics

In the 1930s Quebec provincial politics was characterized by polarization along religious, linguistic and cultural lines. There were many clashes in the legislative assembly and debate was known for the stridency of its tone.

In 1936 a new political party, the *Union Nationale*, under the leadership of Maurice Duplessis and committed to promoting Quebec nationalism and supporting free enterprise and the church, came to power in Quebec's provincial legislature. Duplessis and the Union Nationale lost the provincial election in 1939, but for the most part they retained power in Quebec until Duplessis died in 1959. Duplessis governed with the belief that Quebec should stand on its traditions—a culture founded on religion and an economy founded on agriculture. This system of social-religious-political control persisted until the "Quiet Revolution" of the early 1960s.

A renewed Quebec

Until the Second World War the strong influence of the church was important in the political life throughout Quebec. After the war, the church continued to play a dominant role in rural elections, but in the

* Since April 17, 1982 known as the Constitution Act, 1867.

cities and towns its influence was gradually felt less and less. The Liberal government of Jean Lesage, elected in 1960, brought in major reforms in education, labour relations (one of which permitted public employees to form unions and to go on strike) and social affairs.

During the 1960s, several small nationalist parties were formed. In 1967, a century after Canadian Confederation, difference within the Liberal Party led to the defection of René Lévesque, a former Lesage minister. He formed a new alliance in 1968, the Parti Québécois, which became a focal point for those who advocated independence for Quebec. In the election of 1976 the Parti Québécois under Lévesque won a landslide victory, promising to bring a better and more efficient government to the people of Quebec and to hold a province-wide referendum on Quebec's future within Canadian Confederation. Soon after, Premier Lévesque introduced an ambitious legislative program designed to increase the use of the French language in Quebec. The promised referendum was held in May of 1980, when the federalists received 59.6 per cent of the vote and the advocates of "sovereignty association" received 40.4 per cent of the vote for their respective policies.

Agriculture

Initially Quebec's population was mainly rural, and villages tended to follow old seigneurial patterns. Before the First World War, the typical farm in Quebec was relatively small but this pattern began to change after the war and today many farmers have taken over neighbouring farms making their units more productive. Approximately 10.5 per cent of Quebec's total land surface is under cultivation. The largest agricultural regions lie near the St. Lawrence river and in the eastern townships.

Dairying is the most important facet of Quebec agriculture; it has been a staple since the earliest days. It now accounts for 40 per cent of farm receipts from animal production. A typical dairy herd in Quebec consists of 60 cattle, of which 33 are milk-producing cows. Swine production is in second place and there are some 8 000 swine producers.

Crops account for 10 per cent of Quebec's total agricultural income. The most abundant are alfalfa and corn. Other important field crops include potatoes, tobacco and sugar beets. Fruit and vegetable production is carried out on Montreal Island and in the southern counties which have a suitable climate and rich organic soil. Carrots and sweet corn comprise nearly half the value of the fresh vegetable market. Apples and

strawberries are the most important fruits with much of the apple crop processed as cider.

Many farmers gain further income from stands of maple trees which are tapped for sugar sap every spring. The maple sugar industry is one of the oldest in North America, adopted by early white settlers from local Indians. The tapping season begins in mid-March and continues well into April. Quebec has 75 per cent of Canada's production and much is exported throughout the world.

Forestry

The pulp and paper industry in Quebec is centred in the north where there are millions of hectares of boreal pulpwood forest and in the Gaspé Peninsula. The coniferous softwoods in these areas comprise the bulk of Quebec's commercial forest and are among the province's most valued assets. Conservation of the forests is a great concern and the provincial government owns and operates its own fleet of *CL-215* waterbombers, designed and built in Montreal, to control the spread of forest fires.

While Quebec's timber industry is lucrative and supports 350 sawmills, the pulp and paper industry is much larger. Quebec produces more than a third of Canada's pulp and paper and half of Canada's newsprint (the latter represents 33.7 per cent of world production). At least 60 plants process pulp and paper, some of which are integrated plants that engage in the entire process from grinding logs to rolling newsprint.

Mining

Canada produces 40 per cent of the world's chrysotile (an asbestos) and 89 per cent of it comes from Quebec. The first asbestos mine in Quebec was opened a century ago in the eastern townships. Since then a number of mines have been developed along a 100-kilometre belt extending east from the town of Asbestos, the site of the world's largest known deposit.

Until recently copper and zinc have been the most important metals mined in Quebec. Major new iron-ore deposits are now being developed and Quebec is expected to become Canada's largest iron-ore producer. In 1910 a small lead-zinc mine opened near Quebec City and major deposits were discovered at Noranda where large-scale production began in 1951. Nearby are crushers and concentrators which process the ore.

Much of Quebec's mineral potential has still to be explored, but Quebec is a world leader in mineral refining. The Noranda copper facility in Montreal handles copper from mines throughout eastern Canada. It

processes more than half of Canada's refined copper and is the largest copper refinery in the world. Before 1972, Quebec's steel industry was modest and relied on scrap metal as its raw material. The development of important iron-ore mines in the northeast has encouraged the development of an integrated steel industry.

Manufacturing and industry

Quebec has an active textile and clothing industry. Quebec fashions, sold in many parts of the world, have found particularly good markets in Asia. Much of Canada's winter-wear is designed and fashioned in Quebec—both in the highly mechanized capital-intensive mills, and in the labour-intensive clothing factories of Montreal. Montreal is also the centre of the boot and shoe industry.

A large proportion of Canada's organic and inorganic heavy chemicals is produced in Quebec. There are a number of petroleum industries which refine and use imported petroleum products from South America and the Middle East.

Montreal, which built approximately 7 000 sailboats in 1981, has become Canada's sailboat manufacturing centre. In the building of dinghys and daysails (boats without sleeping accommodation) and under-9 metre keel boats designed for weekend regattas, Montreal monopolizes the market.

The Quebec furniture industry, one of the oldest manufacturing industries in Canada, employed some 16 500 persons and grossed sales of approximately $600 million in 1981. More than 65 per cent of all furniture bought in Quebec is also made there.

Having gained a wide reputation in their field, two electronic groups in Montreal have contracted to outfit the United States' fleet of four space shuttles by 1984. Together with a Toronto company, these groups will be supplying three remote manipulator systems that will permit astronauts within the shuttle to retrieve or move payloads in space.

Hydroelectric power

Among Quebec's greatest assets is its immense hydroelectric potential of which only a portion has been used to date. The basis of Quebec's great hydroelectric generating industry that serves the province and its neighbours, is the provincially-owned Hydro-Quebec. Its first major development project was in 1959 on the Manicouagan and Outardes Rivers. Manic 5, one of the generating stations built by Hydro-Quebec, was the site of the world's largest multiple-arch dam. Another project begun in the James Bay area in 1972,

will enable Hydro-Quebec to keep pace with consumer demand during the 1980s. The La Grande project entails constructing four major generating plants, huge dams, and a transportation and communications system.

Transportation
Since the seventeenth century, the St. Lawrence River has been Quebec's major communications artery and today the St. Lawrence Seaway is one of the world's busiest water routes. The river is lined with a succession of ports which are in turn connected to inland centres by a comprehensive network of highways and railroads. Montreal is Canada's most important port and although the St. Lawrence River is frozen five months of the year, icebreakers keep channels open and Montreal accessible to cargo ships with reinforced hulls during the winter months. Montreal is also at the crossroads for southern railway routes and is the eastern starting-point for Canada's two trans-continental railways, the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific.

Quebec's well developed highways in the south are gradually being extended to the more northern parts of the province.

Arts and culture
Quebec's folk *chanson* is a lasting tribute to Quebec's early days. Many of the folk songs were sung by the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century voyageurs who canoed on Quebec's rivers and lakes. A large number were adopted from old French originals—notably *Alouette*.

Félix Leclerc is probably Quebec's first modern *chansonnier*. In the 1950s he travelled throughout the province singing ballads celebrating the uniqueness of its people. The songs, depicting the everyday life of farmers, log-drivers and lumberjacks, encouraged Quebeckers to take pride in their French heritage and culture. Later other singers like Gilles Vigneault , Claude Léveillée, Jean Pierre Ferland, Pauline Julien, Louise Forestier, Robert Charlebois and Diane Dufresne sang these ballads.

This re-awakening of French-Canadian culture was also felt in other spheres. Novelists like Anne Hébert, Roger Fournier and Yves Thériault came into prominence. Their books reflected the feelings and concerns of Quebec as did those of Hubert Aquin, Jacques Godbout, Suzanne Paradis, Marie-Claire Blais and Réjean Ducharme, to name a few.

But not all Quebec writing is in French. Many of Mordecai Richler's novels and short stories and Leonard

Cohen's novels, poems and English *chansons* are based on their personal experiences in Montreal. Hugh MacLennan is one of Canada's best-known novelists and essayists.

Tourists in the old sections of both Montreal and Quebec City are attracted by the artists working in the open air. These artists reflect Quebec's style of modern painting which was influenced by the Montreai Art Association at the turn of the century. After the Second World War, several artists joined together to form, the *automatistes* and later the *plasticiens*. The political views of painters such as Alfred Pellan, Paul-Emile Borduas and later Léon Bellefleur and Jean Paul Riopelle are revealed in their impressionistic styles, which have a high popular appeal.

Quebec is famous for woodcarving, dating back to the early days in New France when Bishop Laval brought artisans from Europe to carve embellishments on church interiors. Inuit carving from northern Quebec is a form of sculpture which is extremely popular.

In the performing arts, both traditional and modern forms are flourishing. Playwrights such as Marcel Dubé, Françoise Loranger, Gratien Gélinas and Michel Tremblay remind their audiences of Quebec's unique history. The vitality of theatre in the province is stimulated further by Canada's National Theatre School in Montreal, which offers parallel courses for French-speaking and English-speaking actors and a co-lingual production course. Students in the school come from all regions of Canada.

Quebec's film industry has been very successful. Canada's first known film was made in Quebec City in 1897, when British engineers erected the monument to Generals Montcalm and Wolfe. Over the years, the federal government's National Film Board (NFB) has provided opportunities for young Quebec filmmakers to experiment and gain experience in cinematography. The careers of Quebec film directors Claude Jutra, Michel Brault and Gilles Carle started with the NFB.

Sports, recreation and tourism

Hockey is considered the favourite sport of many Quebeckers. Since the 1930s, attention has focused on the Montreal *Canadiens* and hockey heroes like Maurice "Rocket" Richard and Guy Lafleur have attracted many fans through their determined style of play.

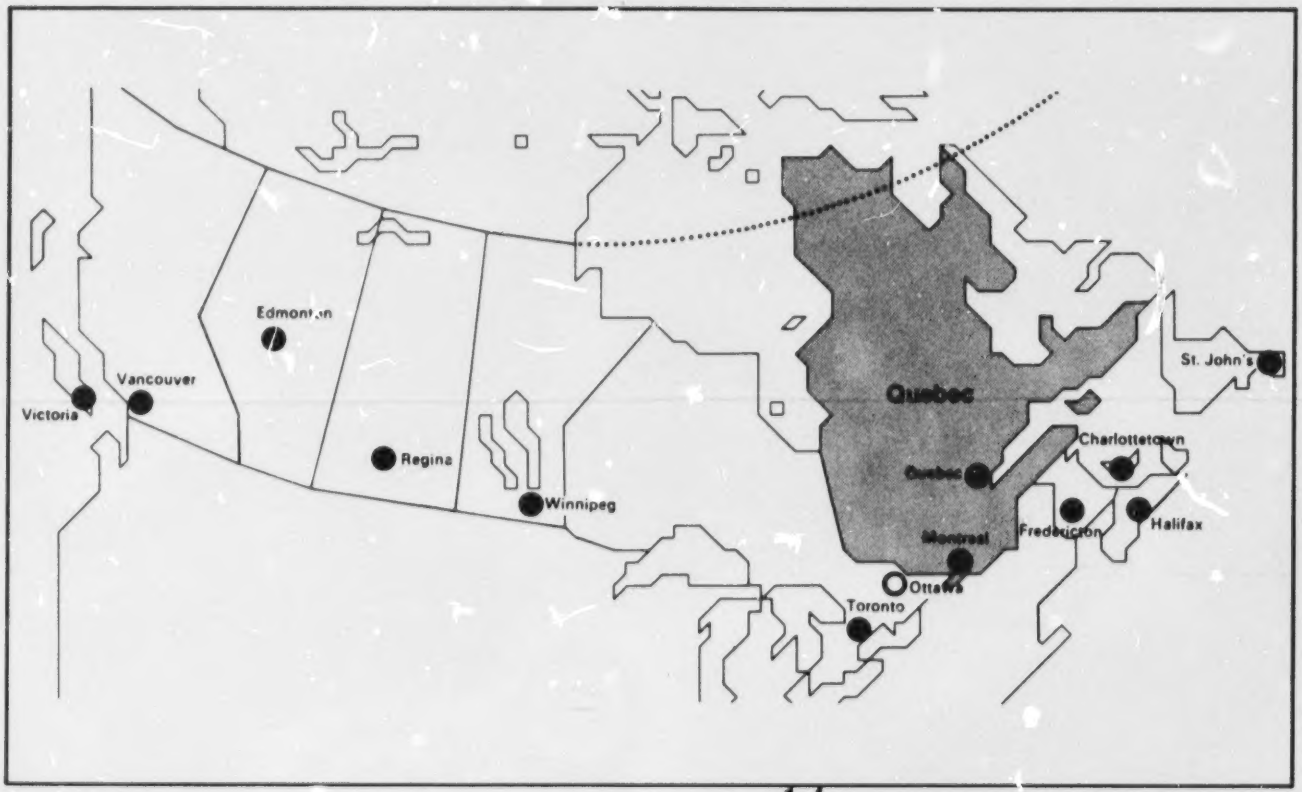
The Montreal Concordes (formerly Alouettes) football team and the Montreal Expos baseball team also have large followings.

Winter sports—snowshoeing, ice-fishing, downhill and cross-country skiing—flourish in this province.

Tourism is important to the provincial economy. As the French-speaking centre of North America, Montreal's attraction for tourists from across the continent is unrivaled. In the midst of this modern city, old Montreal with its fine seventeenth- to- nineteenth-century architecture is a living reminder of the past. Off narrow streets, visitors discover Montreal's best restaurants and craft shops. It is no accident that a sophisticated tourism and hotel school opened in Montreal in 1968. Quebec City is similarly known for its "Old World" flavour, excellent cuisine and its annual winter carnival.

* * *

Quebec has retained its power of attraction with its cultural individuality, its physical beauty and economic diversity. *La belle province* is a land of contrasts, with ancient countryside trails and the modern high-rise world of Montreal. Quebec is a province proud of its history and distinctive culture. Its contribution to Canada's heritage is indeed unique.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